

Tuning in to the Leaders

In the Profession

● ON AIR

Ms Ng Bee Leng

Executive Director
South Central Community FSC



Her Passion: Helping children and families out of intergenerational poverty.

Her Belief: Working with disadvantaged communities for the past 25 years has brought her to believe in strength-based community development that focuses on strengths rather than deficits of impoverished communities.

Her Dream: She hopes to see Singapore as a society where communities are like homes, where helping a neighbour or stranger is as natural as helping a family member. She believes that it takes many helping hands to build a caring and inclusive society that treasures social well-being as much as economic well-being.

Bee Leng is currently the Executive Director of South Central Community FSC, serves on the Management Committee of the Healthy Start Child Development Centre and volunteers with Caritas Singapore and the MSF Review Board.



HER BELIEFS



I **believe** in an equitable society where children born into poverty have *equal opportunities* to succeed and to break out of the poverty cycle.

I **believe** that everybody has strengths to contribute towards building a society where communities are like homes, where helping a neighbour or stranger is as natural as helping a

- A good country is not just about being affluent and rich but it is one where we take care of people, especially those who have very little.
- It is a privilege to be able to live out these beliefs in work every day.
- Being involved in the lives of people in the low income community has allowed much growth and learning.

ACTING ON HER BELIEFS

Serving the **last**, the **lost** and the
least in our society



- Life is much larger than just about me, myself and my family.
- The seed of pursuing social work was planted while doing volunteer work.

- Do not feel stuck or enslaved to your beliefs but liberate your thoughts, beliefs and actions.
- Think about how you can stay true to your beliefs while adapting the actions, interventions and responses to be appropriate to the context.



**LIBERATING
HER BELIEFS**

STRENGTHS-BASED INTERVENTION

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

- **P**eople are experts of their own lives - when people facing problems participate in resolving their own issues they take control and learn new coping skills
- **A**ssets exists in the community, but are often unrecognised and therefore not activated as part of the solution
- **R**elationships Build a Community - *People* are better than institutions in engaging the wider community. Reciprocity is the hallmark of community
- **L**ead by stepping back – facilitate not take over
- **S**trength-focused as opposed to Deficit-focused



• Pull assets together to deal with the problems that the community faces.

• Find people within the community who care and want to help.

• For social workers, looking for problems and deficits often come very easily, leading us to feel overwhelmed and disempowered.

• We must learn to see the glass as half-full and not half-empty at all levels (individual, family and community).



KEEPING HER BELIEFS ALIVE

- Age should never be an excuse to prevent you from trying new things.
- Keep a community who shares your beliefs to make a difference together.
- Find people who inspire you to keep your passion going.



Let's **W**alk our **T**alk

What are my Beliefs
Acting on my Beliefs
Liberating my Beliefs
Keeping my Beliefs Alive

Q&A

For those who want to do good and help, how do you balance between good will and public safety, how do you differentiate between the real thing and scamming?



You must learn to start from a place of trust. When you start with fear, you will find a lot of reasons not to trust. A lot of youths that I work with are very difficult, but that is only one part of them. *Your relationship with them is very important.* Sometimes, it is your relationship with those who may scam you that will keep you from being scammed. You have to be willing to take a little bit of risk. It is okay to be scammed sometimes if you do not lose anything major. But don't compromise on your own personal safety, don't try to be a hero. Do not go alone if you are new. Test your waters. Do these things with your community or with an organisation that is already working with the people you want to help.

Q&A

Many times, policy-makers or other VWOs have their own agenda and work. How do you collaborate with them in an effective manner?



A lot of times we think we have very different perspectives and viewpoints from our partners, so it is good to invite your partner to view things from your angle. Ask yourself if there is another reality. Is there another angle to look at the issue? You have to start by understanding their thinking and to effect the change from there. Look at things differently and attempt the same issue differently, perhaps it may bring both sides closer to a common ground.